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Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

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1 What is Youthpass in Youth Exchanges?

The simple answer is that Youthpass in Youth Exchanges is a Certificate which confirms the participation of a young person/a participant taking part in a Youth Exchange. It is also a Certificate that describes the activity as such and the involvement of the young person/participant. And the more sophisticated answer is that Youthpass and the linked political context offer recognition of non-formal learning within the Youth in Action Programme

And this is what Youthpass looks like:



In the following parts each section of the Youthpass Certificate will be explained.

B2. Youthpass in practice*Youthpass in Youth Exchanges***1.1 Youthpass as confirmation of participation**

Youthpass confirms participation of a young person taking part in a specific Youth Exchange. The first half of the first page includes the name of the participant, the date and town/country of birth and the basic details of the exchange.

European Commission

Education and Culture DG
"Youth in Action" Programme

Youthpass

for **Youth Exchanges**

Volker Schmitz
born on **07/05/1988** in **Bonn, Germany**

participated in

Ecological development in Europe,
a Youth Exchange with 24 young people
from Germany, United Kingdom, France and Estonia.

The activity took place from **10/07/2007**
to **20/07/2007** in **Manchester, United Kingdom.**

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1.2 Description of activity

The next part of the document is a general description of what Youth Exchanges are, as described in the Programme Guide for Youth in Action.

This part provides essential information for people from outside the youth field as it explains the general idea of what a Youth Exchange is really about. This is necessary for situations where the participant who gets Youthpass shows it to someone who has never heard about Youth Exchanges in international youth work. It might also make you think about how you would describe such Exchanges to someone from outside the field in your own words ...

On this page Youthpass will be signed by a representative of the organisation – this could be a legal representative.

The structure of the first page of Youthpass ensures that relevant information about the Exchange is presented in a concise manner, which can be handy to use in support of a job application, for example.

All Youthpass Certificates are stored on a central database for security reasons and to help create a replacement Youthpass if someone loses theirs. Each Youthpass has a unique ID number at the bottom of the first page which will allow people to check whether the Certificate is genuine.



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1.3 Individual description of activities undertaken

The second page of Youthpass for Youth Exchanges starts with a general description of what learning in Youth Exchanges is based on the Key competences for Lifelong Learning.

For further details and background about the Key competences please go to chapter A4 “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning”.

With the second part you have an opportunity to describe your Youth Exchange in a few sentences including details of the preparation and follow-up.

→ To give you an example:

The project “Ecological development in Europe” includes preparation and follow-up: two day and two weekend meetings. The German group met, discussed the local ecological situation, and prepared a map of their city with regard to specific questions (waste and energy usage data, for example). During the Youth Exchange in Malta, the young people lived together with the common challenge of reducing their usage of water and energy. After returning home, they developed personal plans to look after their local environment.

In addition to the general description of your Youth Exchange you have an opportunity to describe individual activities undertaken by each participant. This is often the most important part for stakeholders who come from outside the youth field and read a Youthpass. They are usually interested in what a young person learned or achieved individually. Based on the idea that most of you work with young people on a long-term basis it will be possible for you to point out important aspects.



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→ To give you an example:

Volker Schmitz was involved in activities investigating the ecological system in the local environment (e.g. how is waste dealt with, what kind of nature protection activities exist?). After comparing the different approaches of the countries represented, a discussion about the influences on ecological development followed. Volker took part in developing a practical guide on influences on the environment at local level. He showed particular initiative in preparing and writing the practical guide.

In addition to this part, you have an opportunity to list the partners you co-operated with and the co-funders (if you have co-funding, of course!).

Apart from the general description on page 2, the inclusion of all other parts is optional. For example, if you have nothing relevant to describe about a particular young person and you do not fill in this section, it will not appear on Youthpass.

You can generate Youthpass on a specific website. And this is how it works when you organise an approved project:

- > Together with the contract for your approved project, you will get a link to the Youthpass website www.youthpass.eu
- > You are obliged to inform all participants that they are individually entitled to get a Youthpass.
- > On the Youthpass website you need to register before you can start using the Youthpass generating tool.
- > Help texts will guide you through the different steps.
- > You can easily create Youthpass Certificates by filling in the different boxes online with information about your project and participants. Once all information is there, you can generate the Certificates in pdf for Acrobat Reader and print them.



Further technical details you will find on the website www.youthpass.eu.

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2 Why Youthpass in Youth Exchanges?

Now you have some ideas of what Youthpass in a Youth Exchange is about and what the document looks like. You can now ask, and maybe a lot of people will ask you,:

- > *What is the benefit/potential of using Youthpass in Youth Exchanges?*
- > *Why is Youthpass meaningful for participants?*
- > *Why does it make sense for organisations?*

There are several answers to this depending on your perspective.

For **young people** Youthpass is an opportunity to demonstrate their active participation in a project officially. They can use it when they apply for a job or further education or training. But for young people it also means - and this is even more important - recognising their participation in a project and emphasising their ability to learn and develop.

e.g. If you develop a Youth Exchange with a group of young people, they prepare a lot of the programme elements, they are active in the activity and take on certain responsibilities. So it is relatively easy to imagine what it could mean to them when issuing their Youthpass, perhaps even in a short ceremony at the end of the Exchange. The idea behind Youthpass is also to reflect on the personal learning process with them during the activity and to focus on learning potential.

Youthpass offers an opportunity to document the learning which happens in Youth Exchanges, which shows the commitment and active participation of young people. Especially for the target group of young people who have not managed to finish their formal learning path and who are sometimes referred to as “early school leavers”, “school drop outs”, “disadvantages youngsters” etc. it will be exciting to see if a Youthpass Certificate can make a

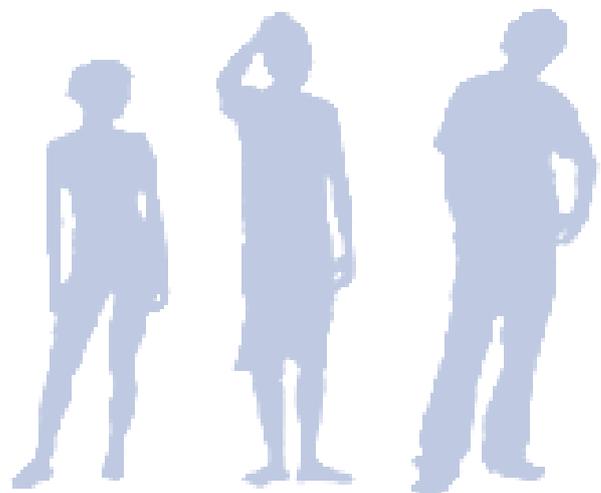
difference when applying for the next step in their lives. Experiences with Youthpass will be documented in a “good practice” part of the website. If you want to share your experiences and support others through communicating them, please use it!

For further ideas and support on how to use Youthpass, please have a look at chapter B1 “How to support learning”.

For **youth workers/leaders, for people who are responsible for the Youth Exchange and their organisations** Youthpass is one way of using a Europe-wide system for validation and recognition of their youth work. The Youthpass Certificates also show that you organised an activity which was quality-checked by the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme in your country and financially supported by the European Commission.

If you use the educational recommendations concerning the learning process, objectives and outcomes described in this Youthpass Guide, you can increase the educational impact and quality of your youth work.

Youthpass highlights the added value in terms of learning experienced in a Youth in Action activity – as you can read about further in chapter A5 “Youthpass - more than a certificate of participation”.



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3 How can Youthpass be used in a Youth Exchange?

“Youthpass is more than just a piece of paper and more than just the cream on top”. This is the intention of those who were part of the development of Youthpass. But what could it look like, how can you use it from the first moment you hear of Youthpass to the very last moment when you finalise the Youth Exchange?

Have a look at this flow chart of a typical Youth Exchange:

Initial ideas for an Exchange



Consolidation of a group of participants



First setting of aims and objectives and thinking about possible partners abroad



Contact with partner organisation(s)



Deciding with project partners about main aims and objectives; types of activities needed



Organising the necessary logistics: travel; accommodation; etc



Running the Exchange



Evaluation and follow-up

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Youthpass fits into the flow of a Youth Exchange at several moments and milestones during the activities, as you can see from the following example of relevant questions which could be used at each stage:

Initial ideas for an Exchange



Consolidation of a group of participants
 - what do you want to get out of the Exchange?



First setting of aims and objectives and thinking about possible partners abroad
 - how and what do you want to learn in the Exchange?



Contact with partner organisation(s)



Deciding with project partners about main aims and objectives; types of activities needed
 - sharing ideas about learning goals and how to implement Youthpass



Organising the necessary logistics: travel; accommodation; etc.
 - what did we learn in taking responsibilities here?



Running the Exchange
 - how do we share our learning with each other?
 - when do we organise reflection groups?
 - what activities was I involved in?
 - issuing Youthpass



Evaluation and follow-up
 - what are our future learning goals?
 - how will we use our Youthpass Certificates?

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And now you are invited to read an example which might open your mind up to ideas about how you can adapt this or use it in your own way with your own educational approach:

1. If you start to plan your activity you can integrate Youthpass right from the beginning when planning and setting learning objectives for the Youth Exchange. You can think about the learning potential for individual participants and how to encourage this process. If you are dealing with future topics like working life, active participation in society, active European citizenship, ecological developments etc. you can think about encouraging reflection processes with young people.
2. When your project is approved through your National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme you will get a contract and information letter. There you will find a short explanation of Youthpass and a link to the website: <http://www.youthpass.eu>. You need to register here in order to generate Youthpass Certificates.
3. When you plan the Youth Exchange
 - > *you should inform all participants that they are individually entitled to receive a Youthpass Certificate. It is your contractual obligation as an organiser to inform participants about the possibility of receiving Youthpass and to offer it if requested,*
 - > *you can include questions on learning opportunities and personal development in the sessions when you reflect on the ongoing processes within the Exchange,*
 - > *you can include a session on learning and future concepts of learning with a link to Lifelong Learning – chapter B1 “How to support learning” gives a lot of ideas to help with this.*
4. Before you can generate the Certificates you should fill in all the information which is relevant to the activity. Most of the steps can be prepared in advance except the individual part about the achievements and participation of each young person – you will only know this at the end

of the Exchange. You could reserve some time during the Exchange to have a short conversation with the participants or you could decide to do this later and complete the Certificates with some distance from the Exchange.

5. Concerning the generating of Youthpass: You need time to fill in the website before Youthpass can be generated. You can prepare it in advance and the first page can be signed by a legal/official representative of your organisation.

If you want to issue Youthpass on the spot e.g. during the farewell party, you should organise at least one computer with a printer and internet connection – because the Youthpass Certificates are generated using an online database.

There are very creative ways of setting up the technical facilities to prepare Youthpass during a course, e.g., using internet cafes, or asking organisations nearby to provide access to computers and the internet.

If you want to issue Youthpass at the end of the whole project – after the follow-up activity – you have time to prepare the Youthpass Certificate during the following weeks. It can be of great benefit to generate Youthpass Certificates later as the participants have a certain distance from their activity and a different perspective on their learning process.

You will find all relevant technical questions concerning the website, the technical conditions and procedures on www.youthpass.eu.

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4 Language of Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

As a basic standard, Youthpass will be generated in the native language of the country where the project was approved. Concretely, this means that if you apply in Germany and you have a contract from the German National Agency, you have a German contract number and German Youthpass Certificates will be generated.

If participants request it, then you can use other EU languages: as the multilingual website is developed, it will be possible to generate Youthpass in all the official languages of the European Union.

5 Youthpass in Youth Exchanges compared to other Actions

Youthpass for Youth Exchanges does not offer an opportunity for individuals to reflect on the Key competences as in Action 2 and Action 4.3. This is due to the reality that Youth Exchanges are often used by organisations just beginning their activities at European level, so a decision was made to start with a lighter approach. We will evaluate thoroughly how Youthpass functions within Youth Exchanges over the next couple of years and decide how to develop its use.

